

SportsPulse: USA TODAY Sports' Jarrett Bell breaks down who won the second day of the draft and who disappointed. USA TODAY Sports



(Photo: Darron Cummings, AP)

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Jordan Thomas always turned heads in Starkville because of his potential and that's the same reason why the former Mississippi State tight end is getting a shot in the NFL.

The Houston Texans picked Thomas with the 37th pick of the sixth round in the NFL Draft on

Saturday. Thomas was the second former Mississippi State to be selected in this year's draft. The Texans also picked offensive lineman Martinus Rankin Friday night in the third round.

More: [Texans pick Mississippi State offensive lineman Martinus Rankin in third round of NFL Draft](#)

Former Mississippi State coach Dan Mullen often said that in hindsight Jordan Thomas, a former No. 1 tight end prospect on the JUCO level, should've redshirted his first year in Starkville. That didn't happen, of course, and Thomas played in 12 games as a junior. He had nine catches for 48 yards and a touchdown in 2016.

Analysts and scouts question his route-running ability, but at 6-foot-5 and 280 pounds, Thomas has a rare combination speed, size and athleticism, and that's why he was picked despite a lack of production at the college level.

Thomas was moved to outside receiver last season and made 22 catches for 263 yards and three touchdowns, but profiles as a tight end at the next level. He also saw action at offensive tackle and defensive end at the JUCO level while playing for East Central after graduating from Sumrall.



JORDAN THOMAS

MISSISSIPPI ST.

TE

Prospect Info

COLLEGE

Mississippi St.

HOMETOWN

Sumrall, MS

CLASS

Senior

HEIGHT

6' 6"

WEIGHT

265 lbs

ARMS

34 1/8"

HANDS

11 5/8"

Prospect Grade

5.17

BETTER-THAN-AVERAGE CHANCE TO MAKE NFL ROSTER

HOW WE GRADE





Round 6 · Pick 37

[GO TO PICK](#)

Combine Results

40 Yard Dash	4.74	SECONDS
Bench Press	16	REPS
Vertical Jump	27.0	INCHES
Broad Jump	111.0	INCHES
3 Cone Drill	7.5	SECONDS
20 Yd Shuttle	4.75	SECONDS
60 Yd Shuttle	--	SECONDS

Player Bio



Thomas is a physical specimen that coaches found a way to get onto the field as an outside receiver in 2017 despite his 6-foot-5, 280-pound frame. The team's tight end depth forced the move, and he took advantage by catching 22 passes for 263 yards and three scores. Thomas was a reserve tight end in 2016, grabbing nine throws for 48 yards and a score, in his first year on campus. He was the No. 1 junior college tight end recruit out of East Central (Mississippi) Community College, where he contributed for two seasons (16 catches, 207 yards, three touchdowns in seven games in 2015) after being lightly recruited from Sumrall High School.

By Lance Zierlein

NFL Analyst

Draft Projection

Rounds 6-7

Overview

From a football standpoint, there isn't enough there to warrant a draft pick, but Thomas has rare size, speed and athletic traits and that might be enough to hear his name called on Day 3 of the draft. Thomas played outside for the Bulldogs this year, but those days are over. He'll need simpler routes as a tight end and has to be coached up on how best to utilize his frame to wall off defenders. A team could add Thomas with the idea of converting him to defensive end if it doesn't work out at tight end.

Strengths

- Freaky size-speed combination
- Big and athletic

- Has size to overwhelm slot defenders on run plays
-

Weaknesses

- Attention comes from physical traits and not football play
 - Has just 31 college catches
 - Unable to find clean releases against press coverage
 - Routes are a mess
 - Struggles getting in and out of breaks and patterns don't fool defenders
 - Fights the football with his hands
 - Lacks functional ball skills down the field
 - Hasn't learned to use his massive frame as a weapon yet
-

Sources Tell Us

"There is no way I would put my name on him to my boss. No way. I don't think he can be trusted on or off the field. You see flashes but I think that's all it is. Flashes." -- AFC team regional scout
